

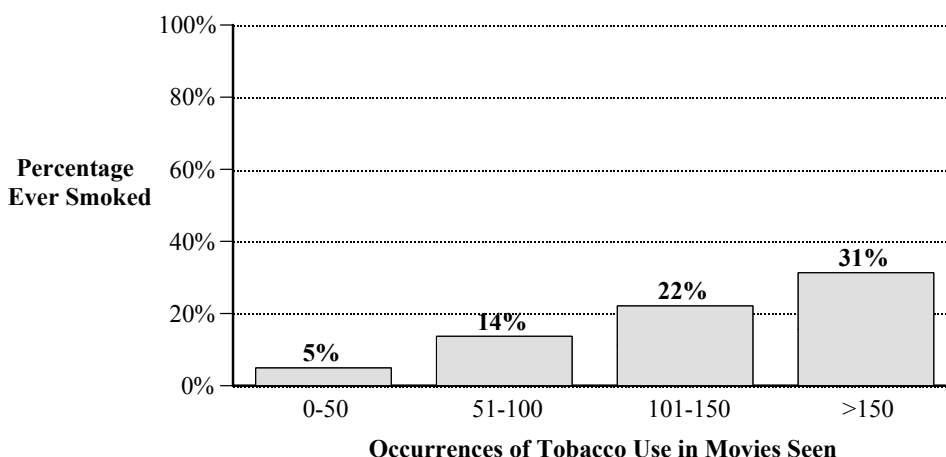
A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

University of Maryland, College Park

Youths Who See Tobacco Use in Movies More Likely to Report Trying Smoking

Exposure to tobacco use in movies is associated with adolescent smoking, according to a survey of nearly 5,000 middle school students in Vermont and New Hampshire. Students who were exposed to tobacco use in movies were more likely to report that they had smoked at least one cigarette in their lifetime (see figure below). This association remained even after adjusting for sociodemographic factors (such as age), social influences (such as friends', siblings', or parents' smoking), characteristics of the child (such as sensation seeking and rebelliousness), and parenting styles (such as authoritative parenting). According to the authors, "The magnitude of the association suggests that influence from films is as strong as other kinds of social influence, such as smoking by a parent or sibling" (p. 4). However, they caution that these results need to be confirmed in other adolescents because adolescents from urban areas and minority ethnic groups were not included in the current study.

**Percentage of Adolescents Who Smoked at Least One Cigarette in Lifetime,
by Exposure to Smoking in Movies**
(n=4,919 youths ages 9-15)



NOTES: Smoking in films was calculated by counting the occurrences of smoking in each of 601 popular contemporary films. Exposure to these films was estimated by asking respondents whether they had seen 50 films randomly selected from the larger pools and calculating the number of occurrences of smoking seen by each respondent.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Sargent J.D., Beach M.L., Dalton M.A., Mott L.A., Tickle J.J., Ahrens M.B., Heatherton T.F. "Effect of Seeing Tobacco Use in Films on Trying Smoking Among Adolescents: Cross Sectional Study," *British Medical Journal* 323:1-6, 2001. For more information, contact James Sargent at James.D.Sargent@Hitchcock.org.